

Message Text

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FOLLOWING REPEAT LIMA 1172 ACTION SECSTATE INFO BOGOTA
BRASILIA BUENOS AIRES CARACAS LA PAZ QUITO SANTIAGO
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C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 1172

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, PINS, PINT, PE
SUBJECT: FURTHER COMMENTARY ON LIMA DISORDERS

SUMMARY. IT APPEARS THAT PRESIDENT VELASCO'S HOLD ON THE COUNTRY
MAY HAVE BEEN DAMAGED SOMEWHAT BY THE FEBRUARY 5-6 DISORDERS IN
LIMA. THE PERUVIAN ARMY ITSELF CANNOT YET HAVE FULLY DIGESTED
EVENTS AND DECIDED WHO MUST BE BLAMED FOR THE MISHANDLING OF THE
GUARDIA CIVIL STRIKE AND SUBSEQUENT VIOLENCE. IT IS POSSIBLE,
HOWEVER, TO MAKE CERTAIN OBSERVATIONS ON THE POLICE STRIKE, THE
CIVIL DISORDER THAT FOLLOWED, APRA'S SITUATION, POPULAR ATTITUDES
TOWARD THE GOVERNMENT, THE CALL FOR A POPULAR REVOLUTIONARY
MOVEMENT AND OTHER MATTERS BEING DEBATED BY PERU'S ARMY AS IT
DECIDES WHAT, IF ANYTHING, MUST BE DONE TO COPE WITH ANTI-
GOVERNMENT FEELINGS.

1. THE POLICE STRIKE. THE VIOLENCE OF FEBRUARY 5-6
SHOULD NOT HAVE OCCURRED. TO MOST CLOSE OBSERVERS, PERUVIAN AND
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 032244

FOREIGN, IT IS DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND WHY THE POLICE DID NOT RE-
CEIVE A HEALTHY RAISE OR WHY THE ARMY DID NOT PROVIDE LIMA WITH
SECURITY AS SOON AS THE POLICE WENT ON STRIKE. MOREOVER, WHY
DID THE CABINET (PRESIDENT VELASCO) DECIDE TO USE FORCE AGAINST

THE POLICE? A POSSIBLE EXPLANATION MAY BE THAT VELASCO BELIEVED THAT THE GC, AS A PARAMILITARY FORCE, HAD TO BE DEALT WITH HARSHLY AS AN EXAMPLE TO OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE ARMED FORCES THAT MIGHT BE TEMPTED TO WAVER. HE MAY HAVE BELIEVED THAT SINCE THE GC IS A RELATIVELY POOR RELATION, SEVERITY TOWARD THEM WOULD NOT BE RESENTED BY THOSE ELEMENTS OF THE THREE PRINCIPAL SERVICES THAT COUNT. APPARENTLY THE ARMY CONSCIOUSLY DECIDED TO TEACH THE POLICE A LESSON IN OBEDIENCE AND TRAGEDY ENSUED. ONLY HOURS BEFORE THE ARMY ATTACKED THE POLICE, BISHOP BAMBAREN OF LIMA, WHO WAS MEDIATING THE STRIKE, WAS REPORTEDLY ASSURED THAT VIOLENCE WOULD NOT TAKE PLACE. BUT IT DID, AND, IN THE ENSUING RIOTS, ACCORDING TO OFFICIAL FIGURES 86 PERSONS WERE KILLED, 162 INJURED AND 1,012 CIVILIANS ARRESTED. LA PRENSA OF FEBRUARY 11 STATES THAT 520 POLICEMEN ARE UNDER ARREST; AND INCREDIBLY, THE GOP CLAIMS THERE WERE NO MILITARY OR POLICE DEATHS. THE EMBASSY ESTIMATES 200 DEATHS, INCLUDING A NUMBER OF POLICE-MEN. THE POLICE THEMSELVES ARE TELLING FRIENDS THAT BETWEEN 100 AND 200 POLICE DIED; THE EMBASSY CANNOT VOUCH FOR THE TRUE FIGURES.

2. THE COMMAND STRUCTURE. ON FEBRUARY 5, AFTER CIVIL DISORDERS BROKE OUT IN DOWNTOWN LIMA, A STATE OF EMERGENCY WAS DECLARED IN PERU BY THE CABINET. POWER THEREBY PASSED FROM THE INTERIOR MINISTRY AND OTHER CIVILIAN AUTHORITIES TO THE REGIONAL MILITARY COMMANDERS; IN LIMA-CALLAO'S CASE TO GENERAL RODRIGUEZ FIGUEROA. ACCORDING TO MISSION SOURCES, RODRIGUEZ RECEIVED HIS ORDERS DIRECTLY FROM VELASCO, THUS BYPASSING RECENTLY INSTALLED WAR MINISTER MORALES-BERMUDEZ. FROM FEBRUARY 5 UNTIL THIS DATE, RODRIGUEZ' COMMAND HAS ISSUED COMMUNIQUES IN ITS NAME ON THE CURFEW, TRAVEL, AMUSEMENTS, HOARDING AND OTHER MATTERS. PRESIDENT VELASCO RULES LIMA THROUGH RODRIGUEZ. BASED ON THE LIMITED INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO THE EMBASSY, PRIME MINISTER MORELES-BERMUDEZ HAS BEEN LARGEY IF NOT ENTIRELY OUT OF THE PICTURE SO FAR.

3. THE CIVIL DISORDERS. BOTH THE ARMY AND CIVILIAN POLITICAL ACTIVISTS WERE UNPREPARED FOR THE FEBRUARY 5 DISORDERS.
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 STATE 032244

ASSUMING APRA WAS HEAVILY INVOLVED, THEN IT IS MODERATELY SURPRISING THAT TROUBLE DID NOT TAKE PLACE IN TRUJILLO AND OTHER AREAS OF THE "APRA NORTH" PART OF PERU. IT APPEARS THAT APRA SIMPLY DID NOT HAVE TIME TO REACT NATIONALLY TO THE FAST-BREAKING EVENTS OF FEB 5. THE DEMONSTRATIONS WERE A POPULAR, LARGEY YOUTHFUL LIGHTNING REACTION AGAINST ALLEGED MASSACRES OF POLICE-MEN (THE GOP STILL INSISTS THAT NONE DIED) AND AGAINST A SERIES OF GOP TARGETS: THE MILITARY (THE DOWNTOWN MILITARY OFFICERS' CLUB); SINAMOS (ITS NEWSPAPER, CORREO, AND PART OF THE BUILDING IT OCCUPIES, THE CIVIC CENTER, WERE GUTTED BY FIRE); AND EXPRESO, THE MOST MILITANT, PRO-MOSCOW COMMUNIST MOUTHPIECE OF THE REVOLUTION (EXPRESO(S WORKERS REPULSED A MOB SEEKING TO SET FIRE TO EXPRESO'S BUILDING). LATER IN THE DAY, THE POOR, NO DOUBT INCITED

BY POLITICAL ACTIVISTS, HAD A HEYDAY RAMPAGING THROUGH SUPER-MARKETS AND DOWNTOWN STORES. CAR BURNINGS ADDED TO THE GENRAL CONFUSION. ATTACKS ON THE CHANCERY AND SHERATON APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN INCIDENTAL TO THE REAL OBJECTIVES OF THE DEMONSTRATORS, OR AT LEAST NOT THE CENTRAL OBJECTIVE OF THE LARGE MASS OF THE DEMONSTRATORS. FINALLY, AFTER OVER THREE HOURS OF MOB RULE, THE ARMY ROLLED INTO DOWNTOWN LIMA IN TANKS AND ARMORED CARRIERS, GRADUALLY RESTORING ORDER OVER THE NEXT TWO DAYS.

4. REPRISALS AGAINST APRA. THE GOVERNMENT-INFLUENCED PERUVIAN PRESS AND PRESIDENTIAL PRESS SECRETARY ZIMMERMANN HAVE ACCUSED APRA PUBLICLY OF BEING RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CIVIL DISORDERS. NAMES HAVE NOT BEEN MENTIONED ALTHOUGH LA CRONICA ASSERTED ON FEBRUARY 10 AND 11 THAT THE APRISTA DEAN OF THE LIMA BAR ASSOCIATION, CARLOS ENRIQUE FERREYROS, MIGHT BE INVOLVED. THE "ULTRA" LEFT (MAOISTS) AND OLIGARCHS HAVE ALSO BEEN MENTIONED, AS HAS CIA (SEE PARA 6). APRA IS, OF COURSE, A HIGH PRIORITY TARGET FOR THE LEFTIST AND COMMUNIST CIVILIAN SUPPORTERS OF THE GOP. IN ADDITION, APRA HAS ALWAYS BEEN FAIR GAME FOR THE ARMY. IN AN INTERVIEW WITH A BUENOS AIRES NEWSPAPER (LA OPINION), APRA LEADER HAYA DE LA TORRE, WHO WILL BE CELEBRARING HIS 80TH BIRTHDAY ON FEB 22, DENIED PARTY COMPLICITY IN THE RIOTS; HE DID NOT PRECLUDE THAT INDIVIDUALS MAY NOT HAVE ACTED ON THEIR OWN. ANY SERIOUS REPRISALS AGAINST APRA COULD PROVOKE APRA'S MOVE TO CLANDESTINITY AS WELL AS TERRORISM, AN ACTION WHICH APRA HAS RESORTED TO IN THE PAST. A MILGOV CONFRONTATION WITH APRA MIGHT ALSO THREATEN PERU'S RELATIONS WITH CARLOS ANDRES PEREZ' VENEZUELA, GIVEN WHAT ARE ASSUMED TO BE VERY STRONG ACCION

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 STATE 032244

DEMOCRATICA-APRA TIES (EMBASSY CARACAS MIGHT BE ABLE TO SHED LIGHT ON CURRENT AD ATTITUDES TOWARD APRA).

5. APRA AND MAOISM. ANTI-COMMUNIST APRA IS NOT THE ONLY POLITICAL GROUP WHICH MUST BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT BUT ALSO ITS UNLIKELY MAOIST ALLIES (BANDERA ROJA AND PATRIA ROJE). TOGETHER, APRA (APPARENTLY ARMANDO VILLANUEVA'S FACTION PROBABLY WITH HAYA'S QUIET BLESSING) AND THE MAOISTS HAVE MADE THE SUTEP TEACHERS UNION THE MOST MILITANT AND ANTI-GOVERNMENT OF THE LARGE UNIONS. PERHAPS ACTING JOINTLY, APRA'S AGITATIONS AND MAOIST STUDENT LEADERS PROVOKED THE FEBRUARY 5-6 DISTURBANCES AFTER THE ARMY INCREDIBLY HAD GIVEN THEM A POPULAR CAUSE. APRA IS BELIEVED ALSO IN TOUCH WITH ACCION POPULAR (BELAUNDE'S PARTY), WHICH HAS A FOLLOWING IN THE MIDDLE CLASS SUBURBS. SO FAR, PERU'S CIVILIAN OPPOSITION TO VELASCO HAS BEEN DIVIDED. CONTINUED VELASCO RULE COULD UNITE THEM.

6. THE CIA. IN PAVLOVIAN FASHION, REGIME APOLOGISTS, FROM FOREIGN MINISTRY PRESS SPOKESMAN FAURA IN WASHINGTON TO LIMA'S LA PRENSA AND EXPRESO (AND PERU'S AMBASSADOR TO VENEZUELA, LUIS BARRIOS, CARACAS 1538), SUGGESTED OR FLATLY ACCUSED THE CIA OF ENGINEERING WITH APRA THE FEB 5 DISORDERS. HOWEVER, ON

FEB 6, PRESIDENTIAL PRESS SECRETARY ZIMMERMANN BLAMED APRA AND THE ULTRA LEFT. SINCE THEN, THE GOVERNMENT-OWNED PRESS HAS ZEROED IN ON APRA, SOMETIMES ALLEGING THAT APRA LEARNED ITS TRICKS FROM THE CIA, BUT NO LONGER ACCUSING CIA OF PARTICIPATION IN THE FEB 5 RIOTS. IN FACT, INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO THE EMBASSY SUGGESTS THAT PRESIDENT VELASCO HIMSELF IS PERSUADED THAT THE CIA WAS NOT INVOLVED. BOTH THE EPARTMENT OF STATE SPOKESMAN AND THE AMBAS-SADOR IN AN EMBASSY COMMUNIQUE HAVE SO STATED CATEGORICALLY. LEFTIST EDITORIAL WRITEFS REMAIN ON THE CIA WICKET, NONETHELESS, AND CONTINUE MAKING LOOSE CHARGES AGAINST THE USG.

7. POPULAR ATTITUDES. IN LIMA, THE UNPOPULARITY OF THE VELASCO GOVERNMENT ROSE PERCEPTIBLY WITH THE TAKEOVER OF THE PRESS ON JULY 28. OVER SIX YEARS OF MILITARY RULE AND RECENTLY INCREASING ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, PARTICULARLY UNEMPLOYMENT AND INFLATION, ADD TO THE DISSATISFACTION. THE ARMY'S "MASSACRE" OF POLICEMEN -- DEMONSTRATING STUDENTS SHOUTED "VELASCO ASSASSIN" - WAS WHAT IT TOOK TO SUDDENLY, ALMOST SPONTANEOUSLY SET OFF LIMA'S CROWDED DOWNTOWN AREAS AGAINST THE REGIME. APRA AND MAOIST STUDENT CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 05 STATE 032244

AGITATORS TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE POPULAR MOOD.

8. PRO-GOVERNMENT CIVILIANS. UP TO NOW, THE MILITARY HAVE REFUSED ADAMANTLY TO ALLOW ANY ONE CIVILIAN ORGANIZATION TO REPRESENT THE REVOLUTION. THE MILGOV ITSELF HAS WANTED TO CREATE GRASS ROOTS ORGANIZATIONS BUT IN ITS OWN, LARGEY INEFFECTIVE WAY THROUGH SINAMOS (THE SOCIAL MOBILIZATION AGENCY WHICH WAS A MAJOR TARGET OF THE DEMONSTRATORS). THE DISORDERS OF FEBRUARY 5-6 GAVE THE IMPETUS TO LEFTIST CIVILIAN DESIRES FOR UMBRELLA ORGANIZATIONS GROUPING THE REVOLUTION'S MILITANTS. ON FEBRUARY 9, THE CREATION OF A COORDINATING COMMITTEE GROUPING POPULAR ORGANIZATIONS (LABOR CENTRALS, INDUSTRIAL COMMUNITIES, PEASANTS, WOMEN, YOUTH, ETC.) WAS ANNOUNCED. COMMUNISTS, TROTSKYITES, OTHER SOCIALISTS AND OPPORTUNISTS WERE ALL IN ONE BAG. THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE (LIMA 1089) ANSWERED AN UNDEFINED "CALL" FROM PRESIDENT VELASCO AND SET OUT TO DEFEND THE REVOLUTION, ASSUMING, AMONG OTHER TASKS, RESPONSIBILITY FOR FOOD SUPPLIES. ON FEBRUARY 10, THE MINISTRY OF FOOD ANNOUNCED THAT FOOD SUPPLY WAS ITS BUSINESS; ALREADY, THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE IS STEPPING ON GOVERNMENT TOES. UNDAUNTED, A SECOND GROUP OF CIVILIANS HAS JUST ANNOUNCED THE BIRTH OF THE MOVEMENT OF THE PERUVIAN REVOLUTION (SEPTEL), A GROUP COMPOSED OF MARXIST AND LEFTIST INGELLECTUALS AND JOURNALISTS, HEADED OSTENSIBLY BY ALBERTO RUIZZ ELDREDGE. SINAMOS AND THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS ARE ABSENT. THE ARMY'S REACTION TO THESE DISPARATE BANDWAGONS IS UNKNOWN. WORRIED ABOUT FEBRUARY 5-6 POPULAR DEMONSTRATIONS, CIVILIAN SUPPORTERS OF VELASCO ARE ANXIOUS TO GROUP THEM-SELVES. WHETHER THE ARMY IS READY TO BE CROWDED TO THE LEFT BY "MASS" CIVILIAN GROUPINGS, PURPORTING TO REPRESENT THE

CAMPESINOS AND WORKERS, IS UNCLEAR. FURTHERMORE, PERU DOES NOT APPEAR READY FOR A SYSTEM OF CUBAN STYLE BLOCK CAPTAINS AND REVOLUTIONARY BRIGADES. UNLESS A VELASCO, DESPERATE FOR PUBLIC SUPPORT, WANTS TO TAKE A PLUNGE TO THE LEFT, IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT THE MILITARY WILL WISH TO PERMIT ANY MASSIVE SORT OF MOVEMENT THAT WOULD POLARIZE THE COUNTRY STILL HELD TOGETHER IN PART BY A CONVICTION THAT THE MILITARY ARE NOT COMMUNISTS OF EVEN MARXISTS.

9. WHERE WAS VELASCO? THROUGHOUT LAST WEEK, PEOPLE ASKED,
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 06 STATE 032244

"WHERE IS VELASCO?" THERE WAS NO RESPONSE, NOT A WORD FROM VELASCO. HE TURNED POWER OVER TO HIS MILITARY COMMANDERS, KEPT IN TOUCH WITH THEM, AND THEY RESTORED ORDER IN LIMA (GENERAL RODRIGUEZ) AND KEPT THE LID ON IN THE PROVINCES. IT IS ANYONE'S GUESS WHY VELASCO DISAPPEARED. PERHAPS, HE WANTED TO STAY ABOVE THE FRAY. PERHAPS, HE WANTED TO PROVE THAT THIS IS "MILITARY" RULE AND NOT VELASCO RULE. HOWEVER, THE MOBS SHOUTED INSULTS AND SCRIBBLED "DEATH TO VELASCO" ON WALLS. THE PRESIDENT SHOULD HAVE SPOKEN TO HIS FOLLOWERS; HE DID NOT. MORE THAN EVER, THE POPULATION FELT RULED BY A COLD, IMPERSONAL FORCE -- THE ARMED FORCES. GENERAL RODRIGUEZ' COMMUNIQUES WERE SIGNED BY HIS PUBLIC RELATIONS CHIEF, A COLONEL ARAUJO. PUNDITS SAID THAT ARAUJO BECAME THE BEST-KNOWN MAN IN PERU* VELASCO RULED FROM A DISTANCE, POSSIBLY FROM THE WELL-GUARDED MILITARY TRAINING CENTER (CIMP), POSSIBLY FROM HIS HOME AT CHACLACAYO OR A BEACH HOUSE AT PUNTA HERMOSA. AS VELASCO TOLD REPORTERS AT HIS JANUARY 29 PRESS CONFERENCE, "LET THEM TAKE THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE. I DO NOT LIVE HERE."

10. THE BURDEN OF RESPONSIBILITY. AS NOTED IN THE SUMMARY PARAGRAPH, IT IS TOO EARLY TO KNOW WHO WILL BE BLAMED FOR THE RIOTS. THE ARMY FAILED TO PROVIDE SECURITY FOR THE FIRST DAY AND A HALF WHEN LIMA WAS STRIPPED OF POLICE PROTECTION. SOMEHOW THE ARMY COULD NOT BELIEVE THAT CIVILIAN ELEMENTS IN LIMA MIGHT RIOT. THE ARMY FAILED TO SECURE THE CITY WHEN IT ASSAULTED THE POLICE BARRACKS. AGAIN IT WAS INSENSITIVE TO THE POPULAR MOOD. BUT WHEN THE ARMY ROLLED DOWN THE STREETS, ORDER WAS IMPOSED IN A MATTER OF HOURS. THE TANKS WERE NOT CHALLENGED; THE ARMY COMMANDED. JUST HOW LONG THE ARMY CAN GO IT ALONE IS ANOTHER MATTER. THE POLICE ARE NEEDED. ACCOUNTS REMAIN TO BE SETTLED. PERU'S GENERALS MUST DECIDE WHAT IS WRONG; THE NAVY AND CONSTABULARY ARE TO SOME EXTENT DISAFFECTED; THE AIR FORCE FENCE-SITS. WHETHER THE ARMY IS CAPABLE OF RENEWING ITS LEADERSHIP AND THEREBY GIVE THE COUNTRY NEW RULERS IS A QUESTION THE EMBASSY CANNOT YET ADDRESS. VELASCO APPEARS IN CHARGE, BUT WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT IS BEING SAID BY HIS GENERALS AND MIDDLE-CLASS OFFICERS BEHIND HIS BACK.

11. COMMENT. IN THE COMING DAYS, MISSION WILL TRY TO PLUMB

THE ARMY FOR INSIGHTS INTO THEIR VIEWS ON THE IMPACT OF RECENT
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 07 STATE 032244

EVENTS ON THE POWER SITUATION. HAS VELASCO BEEN WEAKENED? WILL HE REMAIN IN POWER OR HAS HE FORFEITED THAT RIGHT? WOULD WAR MINISTER MORALES-BERMUDEZ BE CALLED UPON, OR WOULD A TROOP COMMANDER SUCH AS RODRIGUEZ TAKE OVER? THE NON-VIOLENT IMAGE OF THE PERUVIAN REVOLUTION HAS CERTAINLY SUFFERED; FOLLOWING SUPPRESSION OF THE RIOTS LONGER-TERM REPRESION COULD FOLLOW. THIS HAD PREVIOUSLY NOT BEEN THE PATTERN OF THE REVOLUTION. THE COUNTRY MUST ALSO FACE ITS ECONOMIC PROBLEMS WITH INFLATION SURE TO SPARK PAY RAISE DEMANDS AND LABOR UNREST. BILATERALLY, OUR CIVIL AIR DISPUTE WITH PERU MIGHT HAVE SERIOUS REPERCUSSIONS ON OUR RELATIONS. IT MIGHT BE THE KIND OF FOREIGN PROBLEM THAT VELASCO COULD CITE TO HOLD HIS GENERALS TOGETHER. ALTERNATIVELY, IT COULD BE THE KIND OF PROBLEM THAT THEY COULD CITE TO ENFORCE CHANGE. AGAIN, THE EMBASSY DOES NOT KNOW WHAT IS GOING ON IN ARMY COUNCILS. WE SHALL TRY TO LEARN. DEAN UNQTE
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